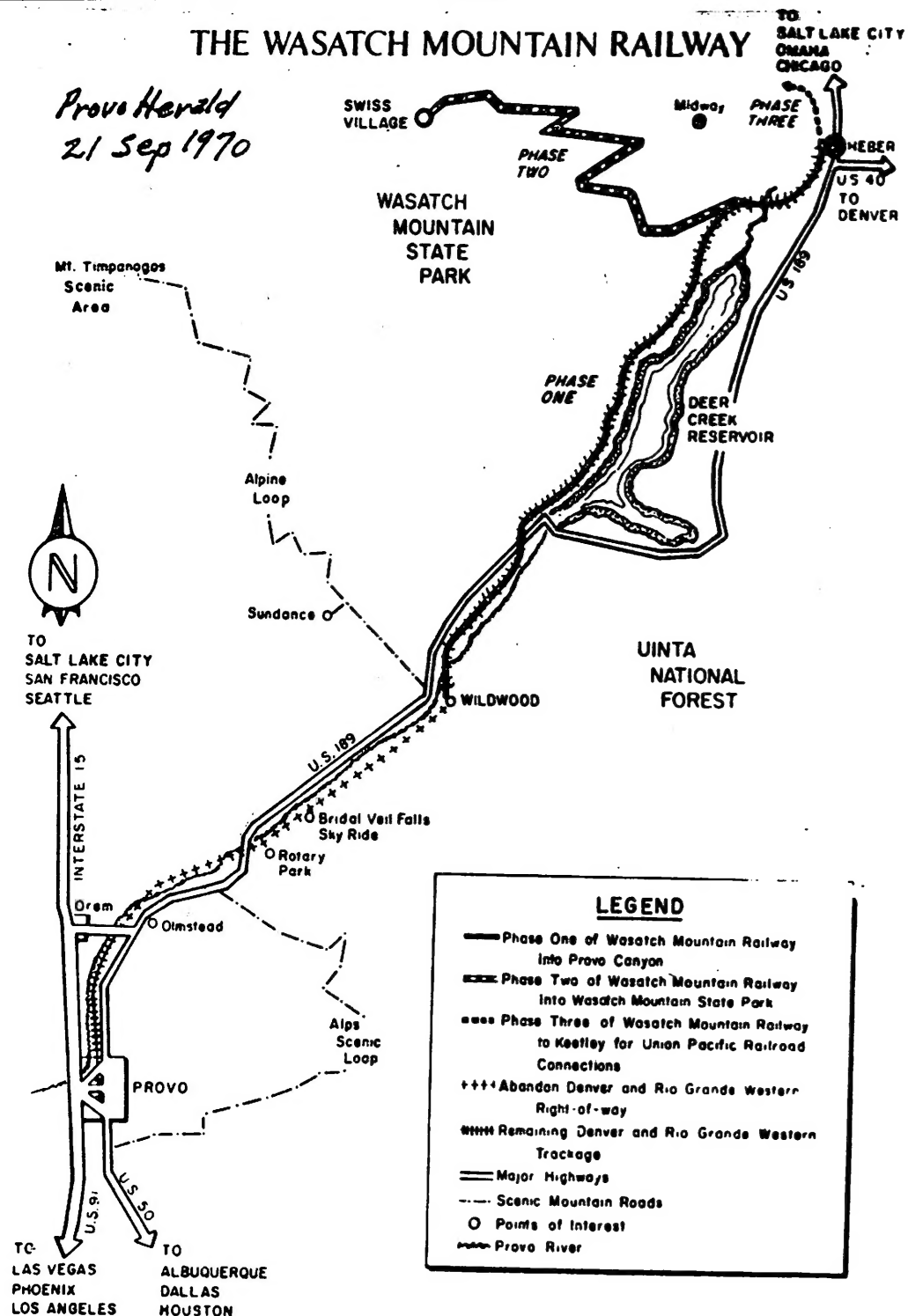


THE WASATCH MOUNTAIN RAILWAY

Provo Herald
21 Sep 1970



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HEBER CITY — The fate of a proposed scenic tourist steam locomotive railway scheduled to run between Heber City and Wildwood in Provo Canyon will be decided on Tuesday, Sept. 22, when the Utah State Road Commission meets at 1 p.m.

Two members of the Wasatch Railway Museum and Foundation Inc. will meet with the road commission.

The foundation, the Wasatch Chamber of Commerce and other interested citizens met Thursday with representatives of the state road commission to present a feasibility report concerning the advantages of the steam tourist railway.

The right of way, originally owned by the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad, has been purchased by the road commission, which plans to remove all the D&RGW tracks from Olmstead in lower Provo Canyon to Heber including the track needed for the scenic railroad. This action stems from the proposed expressway through Provo Canyon. The bids on the project to remove the trackage were delayed for two weeks to enable the Commerce Committee to prepare a study of the venture.

Extensive Study

Committee Chairman Lowe Ashton unfolded the details of the extensive study made. Of the more than 100 steam tourist railroads now operating in the United States, two were chosen for the initial study. The Stone Mountain Scenic Railroad in Stone Mountain, Ga., was chosen because it is a profit-oriented railroad apparently operating on some type of foundation base, and the Black Hills Central was chosen for equipment and geographic similarities. Contact was made with the operators, with a consensus that the proposal's chances of great financial success are most favorable.

Heber Valley is ideally

situated for a scenic railroad with its beautiful mountains, canyons, and lakes, officials feel. A survey by the foundation shows that a steam tourist railroad through Provo Canyon would increase tourism in Central Utah. The Heber City area has everything needed to support an important tourist project of this type.

The wealth of scenery, excellent highway access, other developments for tourist-Homestead and Wasatch Mountain State Park, as well as the LDS Temple Square, Timpanogos National Monument, Brigham Young University and University of Utah, as well as the highly important Wasatch Front population centers from which to draw for initial patronage support, required in a railway of this type.

Several Letters

Mr. Ashton stated the group had received several letters of intent for financial aid. Richard Southwick, president of Unidine, Provo, expressed his company's interest in the project and further stated he would like to see the railway extended directly into Provo.

The group concluded with the statement that the community is united concerning the railway, and as all the equipment is available, and that the railway would not interfere with the present road design, justifies a trial period of time, as once the tracks are removed the opportunity for economic progress for Heber City will be lost.

An open floor discussion followed with Representative Dan Dennis of the Utah State Legislature stating, "I think that very often, we, in the name of progress, have done some things in life that we look back on and regret. I think, probably, in the construction of highways this is quite prevalent, not only in our state, but in other areas. I would feel like probably some effort should be made to delay the

decision making and allow these people time to come up with some substantial figures and something to back it up. I think when you are talking about the 22nd (Sept. 22, 1970), you are making it almost impossible for them."

Senator Speaks

One of the most thought-provoking addresses came from Senator Robert F. Clyde, as he spoke to the State Road Commission stating, "One of the largest efforts that we make annually or semi-annually in the legislature, or as often as we meet, it seems, is the problem of how do we attract development capital, how do we promote our state and we have created, as you well know, a tourist promotion program.

"We have an Industrial Development Program and we cooperate with Pro-Utah and with other private organizations in an effort to project Utah in order to broaden the tax base. Now, attendant with that effort is the ever-with-us problem of how do we help these rural areas. They starve to death, they are so far away from the Wasatch Front where all the capital flows in to the more populated areas, and we constantly wrestle with the problems of how to help these areas such as this one lift themselves up and keep competitive in a very difficult world, and we consider the times of past measures and proposals which seek to give tax relief which offer other kinds of incentive for the development and the investment in these areas.

"Now, gentlemen, here is an opportunity, here is a rural area asking not for state money, strangely enough, but for some time to possibly develop their own area and try to do the very thing we try to do as a legislature, year after year. And, I think that you should carry the position to the Commission that those of us in the

Study Asks Heber Steam Railroad

About 22 sep 1970

Special to The Tribune

HEBER CITY — A preliminary feasibility study of establishing a scenic steam railroad in Heber Valley running between Heber City and Deer Creek ~~Pass~~ or Wildwood in

Provo Canyon was presented Thursday to representatives of the Utah State Road Commission at a meeting in the Wasatch County Courthouse.

The study was presented by Lowe Ashton, chairman of the

"Save the Heber Creeper" Committee, Wasatch County Chamber of Commerce.

Mr. Ashton listed what he called unique circumstances that make a scenic steam railroad more favorable now than any other time.

He said the state of Utah owns the right-of-way that the right-of-way parallels much of Wasatch Mountains State Park, the community interest in the tourist attraction is high, the large amount of valuable steam railroad equipment which is now available through the Wasatch Railway Museum and Foundation Corp., could be used, there would be a loss to the western tourist of the popular Silverton-Durango scenic steam railroad and the growth of steam railroads as tourist attractions have mushroomed within the past eight years.

The chamber committee asked for an extension of six months to complete their feasibility study. The State Road Commission will meet Tuesday and decide whether more time will be allowed.

The Tuesday meeting was originally scheduled for awarding of bids for salvaging the railroad tracks in Provo Canyon.

Mr. Ashton said it would be necessary to use existing tracks in the Provo Canyon right-of-way between Wildwood and Heber City. He said the use of track and right-of-way would not interfere with the proposed highway improvement, so long as present plans continue to follow the existing highway.

Another reason for the request of additional time is because there is railroad equipment needed for the pro-

